

Billericay Choral Society



# Fauré Requiem

# Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Conductor	Jamie Wright
Accompanist	Ashley Thompson
Soprano	Ailsa Campbell
Baritone/Tenor	George Cook

Saturday 30th November 7.30 pm

St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead

Programme £1

2019

## **Tonight's concert**

### **Requiem**

### **Gabriel-Urbain Fauré 1845-1924**

Fauré was trained as an organist. Among his teachers was Saint-Saëns and Fauré became professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory. His most significant student was Ravel.

Fauré was a classicist and his works were distinctly French. Despite his traditionalism, he did bend the rules to meet his own ends thus contributing to the overturning of musical convention, although his works lack the brashness of Debussy and Ravel.

He was elected to the French Academie des Beaux-Arts in 1909 and awarded the Legion d' Honeur in 1910.

Fauré began work on his Requiem in 1887, following the death of his father in 1885 and his mother in 1887. The première of the first version of the Requiem was at the funeral of a Monsieur Joseph le Soufaché at the Madeleine Church in Paris in 1888. This version only had 5 movements.

Fauré produced an expanded version for use on grander occasions, which was premièred in 1893. This version had 7 movements. The 2 added movements were Offertorium and Libera Me both of which had baritone solos.

A third version of the Requiem was produced in 1900. This was scored for a full orchestra and was probably produced so that the Requiem could be performed in theatres as a concert piece.

### **Fantasia on Christmas Carols    Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872–1958**

Vaughan Williams achieved national recognition before WWI with his works *Toward the Unknown Region*, *On Wenlock Edge*, *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, *A Sea Symphony*, *Five Mystical Songs* and *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. Within a few years he had developed a musical style which would supplant most of the previously established music of the Victorian era.

He used folk-song, impressionism in both harmony and orchestration, the use of varied anthologies of English and American literature for his vocal works and extracts from the King James Bible.

Vaughan Williams often used Christmas as a theme in his music. This was first in evidence in his work on the English Hymnal, published in 1906. There he wrote new carols based on many folk-tunes.

In 1912 he wrote *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* using a similar style to his *Five Mystical Songs*, written in 1911. *Fantasia* is dedicated to Cecil Sharp, which places it among his folk-song works. It incorporates four traditional English carols, *This is the truth sent from above*, *Come all you worthy gentlemen*, *On Christmas night all Christians sing* and *God bless the ruler of this house, and long may he reign*.

*Come all you worthy gentlemen* was collected by Sharp. *On Christmas Night* was collected in Sussex by Vaughan Williams himself in 1904.

The other two tunes came from Herefordshire, the composer acknowledging his friend Mrs Leather as his source. Fragments of other well-known carols appear from time to time as links or counter-melodies.

The *Fantasia* was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford on 12 September 1912 with the composer conducting.

## **Zum Sanctus**

## **Franz Schubert (1797-1828)**

The *Zum Sanctus* is part of Schubert's *Deutsche Messe* which follows a tradition of low masses settings of religious texts in vernacular languages in Austria and southern Germany.

It was commissioned by Johann Philipp Neumann, who commissioned Schubert to write simple, homophonic music that would be easy for an entire congregation to sing. Written in 1827, near the end of Schubert's short life, the German Mass is set to poems by Neumann rather than the traditional Latin text. Although intended for a Catholic service, the work was banned because it was an unauthorized German translation of the Mass.

*Zum Sanctus* is a good example of the most profound musical statements flowing from simplicity. Schubert's music often says a lot with a few, seemingly effortless notes. In the traditional Latin liturgical text, *Sanctus* sounds like a stirring proclamation, "Holy, Holy, Holy, God of power and might." These lines have inspired composers from Mozart and Verdi to John Rutter to write soaring, contrapuntal music. By contrast, Schubert's *Sanctus* is a simple, introspective chorale.

Listen carefully to the inner voices. Schubert sets up our expectation and then throws in some thrilling harmonic surprises:

## **Jamie Wright    Conductor**

Jamie is a singer and conductor, trained at the Royal Academy of Music. He has worked as an arranger and vocal coach in television, performed at the BBC proms, and was recently the soloist in *All the Angel's* at Shakespeare's Globe. Jamie works closely with the National and London Youth Choirs, Welsh National Opera and The Sixteen as a workshop leader and conductor.

As part of the Lord Mayor's project this year, Jamie is currently working with Garsington Opera as Vocal Animateur. As well as being the musical director of Billericay Choral Society he is also a chorister of the Chapel Royal, Tower of London.

Twitter: @jamiewdwright    Web-site: [www.jamie-wright.co.uk](http://www.jamie-wright.co.uk)

## **Ashley Thompson    Accompanist**

Ashley is a professional pianist and conductor, who currently directs The Triple H Community (Hockley), whilst serving as accompanist to Billericay Choral Society, Maldon Choral Society, Anglia Singers (Chelmsford), Gale Singers (Dagenham), Ad Hoc Singers (Upminster) and United Singers (Hornchurch.) He is also Organist to Welsey Methodist Church (Leigh on Sea). Ashley holds an ABCD Diploma in Choral Directing and an ALCM for Piano Accompaniment from the London College of Music.

When not performing he is employed as a piano teacher at Allegro Music Academy (Westcliff on Sea), Holt Farm Junior School (Rochford) and Montgomerie Primary School (South Benfleet).

Away from music Ashley stood successfully for election to Southend on Sea Borough Council in May 2019 and now represents Leigh Ward for the Liberal Democrats.

## Part One

- 1 **Ave Verum Corpus** .....Choir  
Composer William Byrd
- 2 **Sure on this Shining Night** .....Choir  
Composer Morten Lauridsen
- 3 **Go Lovely Rose** .....George Cook  
Composer Roger Quilter
- 4 **Les Berceaux** ....Ailsa Campbell  
Composer Gabriel Fauré
- 5 **Zum Sanctus** .....Choir  
Composer Franz Schubert
- 6 **God So Loved the World** .....Choir  
From *Crucifixion* by John Stainer
- 7 **Fantasia on Christmas Carols** .....Choir and George Cook  
Composer Ralph Vaughan Williams



**George Cook**  
Baritone

## Part Two      Requiem      Gabriel Fauré

### 1 **Introit et Kyrie**

Choir

Grant eternal rest to them, Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them.

### 2 **Offertoire**

Choir and George Cook

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, free the souls of the dead from infernal punishment, and from the deep abyss.

### 3 **Sanctus**

Choir

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the heavens and earth are filled with your glory.

### 4 **Pie Jesu**

Ailsa Campbell

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest, eternal rest.

### 5 **Agnus Dei**

Choir

Lamb of God, who removes the sins of the world, grant them rest.

### 6 **Libera Me**

George Cook and Choir

Free me, Lord, from eternal death, on that day of dread, when the heavens and earth shall move, when you shall come to judge the world.

### 7 **In Paradisum**

Choir

May angels lead you into Paradise. At your coming may martyrs receive you, and may they lead you into the Holy City, Jerusalem.

**Ailsa Campbell**

Soprano



### **George Cook - Baritone**

George is a freelance baritone based in London. He studied Music at Durham University, gaining a high First Class in his final year recital. He was senior choral scholar at Durham Cathedral, conducted the University Chamber Choir and was Musical Director for the Opera Ensemble.

Since graduating, George has been an academic music teacher, at Oakham School. He was also a choral scholar at Peterborough Cathedral, and Ipswich School. He is a graduate of the Genesis Sixteen and National Youth Choir Fellowship schemes, having performed all over the country.

Now in London, George is a choral scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields and deputises in other London churches. He has sung with many ensembles including the Chamber Choir of London, the Hilliard Ensemble, His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, and St Martin's Voices. He is continuing to establish his solo career, with concert experience including Handel's Messiah, Bach's B Minor Mass, Faure's Requiem, and Schutz's Musikalische Exequien. Alongside his singing career, George still wants to inspire the next generation of singers and is an Assistant Leader at London Youth Choir, and the Centre for Young Musicians.

### **Ailsa Campbell - Soprano**

Ailsa, from Northumberland, began her singing career in Hexham Abbey Girl's choir at the age of 9. She completed her undergraduate degree in Music at the University of Bristol. As an undergraduate, she was appointed as the first female Choral Scholar at Bristol Cathedral, was President of the Madrigal Ensemble for two years and conducted the University Chamber Choir in her final year. Ailsa then went on to study for a masters in Solo Voice Ensemble Singing at the University of York with Robert Hollingworth, director of I Fagiolini. She was a member of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain Fellowship Programme, a training scheme for aspiring choral leaders and held the Leeds Festival Chorus Master Scholarship, where she received lessons in front of the choir, conducted them in concerts and was assistant conductor for the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ailsa recently moved to London to pursue her singing and conducting career.

She holds scholarships at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Holy Sepulchre Church and St George's Bloomsbury and is the Creative Director of Putney Choral Society.

## **Ave Verum Corpus**

## **William Byrd (1539-1623)**

Byrd was a prolific English Renaissance composer who wrote music in many different forms. He was born into an Anglican family from Ingatestone. He became a chorister with the Chapel Royal where he was a pupil of Thomas Tallis. Having composed many Anglican sacred works he became a Catholic and wrote sacred music mainly performed in Catholic households when Catholicism was not worshipped openly. His patron Sir John Petre (the son of the former Secretary of State Sir William Petre), of Ingatestome Hall was a discreet Catholic who allowed his house to be used to celebrate mass.

Byrd and his wife were tried and found guilty of recusancy (refusing to attend Anglican services) on several occasions.

Byrd published a collection of 109 motets under the title *The Gradualia* in 1605 and 1607 dedicated this to Lord Petre of Writtle (the former Sir John Petre).

*Gradualia* includes *Ave Verum Corpus*, which sets words specified in the Catholic liturgy for use on the feast of Corpus Christi. Today this is Byrd's most is performed work. It is such a gem and offers rich opportunities for expressive singing. This motet, like Byrd's Masses, attained popularity only in the modern era; being strictly a Catholic work, it was totally shunned by English church musicians until its revival by Catholic choirs late in the nineteenth century.

## **God So Loved the World**

## **John Stainer (1840 – 1901)**

Stainer was an English composer and organist whose music was popular during his lifetime. His work as choir trainer and organist set high standards for Anglican church music. He was also active as an academic, becoming Heather Professor of Music at Oxford.

Stainer became a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral at age ten and was appointed to the position of organist at St Michael's College, Tenbury at the age of sixteen. He later became organist at Magdalen College, Oxford, and subsequently organist at St Paul's Cathedral.

*The Crucifixion* was dedicated to Stainer's friend and pupil William Hodge, and the choir of Marylebone Parish Church. Its first performance, in 1887, was as part of a series of Lenten services. Like much of Stainer's music, it was designed for a purpose, suited to the forces for which it was composed. Stainer's intended *The Crucifixion*, to be a Passiontide cantata written in a style and on a

scale that parish choirs would be able to perform. The simplicity of the music is an indication of the limited capability of the Marylebone Church choir and it is scored for organ accompaniment only.

*The Crucifixion* is modelled on Bach's Passion music, although it is more modest and typically Victorian. *The Crucifixion* remains a favourite in churches around the country. Its simple melodiousness does nothing to hamper its beauty.

Some of the music is sentimental, but *The Crucifixion* also has moments of true beauty and significant choral writing skill, *God so loved the world* is a popular anthem in its own right.

### **Sure on this Shining Night**

### **Morten Lauridsen (born 1943)**

Lauridsen is an American composer who started work as a Forest Service firefighter. He studied composition at the University of Southern California and since 1967 has been teaching at USC Thornton School of Music

*Sure on this Shining Night* is a setting of part of a poem *Description of Elysium* written in 1934 by James Agee (1909-1955). Agee was an American novelist, screenwriter and film critic. In the 1940s, he was the foremost American film critic. Lauridsen admired screenwriters and the Broadway stage composers as.. "they knew what to do with a long, elegant line".

The poem is rather cryptic and deals with a vision of heaven (Elysium) followed by the description of winter on Earth. What is it like to imagine walking through a forest at night, with the stars shining. We know the stars don't really twinkle; that visual phenomenon is caused by fluctuations in the atmosphere. So we don't see them as they really are.

Agee may be using the passing seasons as a metaphor for life passing. Although nature reserves some of her most tender and intimate moments for the winter, with bright snow, star-filled nights, crisp winds. Once summer is past, there's nowhere to go but down to the end of the year, and perhaps downhill to death.

Lauridsen's version conveys the sense of fullness and rapture that infuses the text, even in the face of inevitable change. His music has an overall lyricism and is tightly constructed around melodic and harmonic motifs.

Lauridsen was named an American Choral Master by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2007 he received the National Medal of Arts, "for his composition of radiant choral works combining musical beauty, power and spiritual depth..."

## **Billericay Choral Society**

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**Web site: [www.billericaychoral.co.uk](http://www.billericaychoral.co.uk)**

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### ***Would you like to join us?***

We always welcome new singers. No audition is required.

We practise on Tuesday evenings from 8pm until 10pm  
in the Mayflower Hall in Chapel Street.

Phone or e-mail Lorraine Douglas for details or come to a rehearsal.

***Our next concert.....*** Will be on 21st March 2020

Watch our web-site and our Facebook page for more details.

On 4th July 2020, we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower when we reprise *The Mayflower Pilgrims* by Clive Jenkins.



We would like to thank:  
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